

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 SAM-01 AID-05 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01

NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01 IGA-02 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 /095 W
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7934

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 14073

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ETRD

SUBJ: BOYCOTT: NEW ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES

REF: (A) STATE 250117, (B) CAIRO 13981

1. AS WASHINGTON AGENCIES ARE AWARE, EGYPT HAS SHOWN FLEXIBILITY ON BOYCOTT MATTERS THAT REFLECTS BOTH RELATIVE LACK OF NATIONAL CONCERN OVER THE ISSUE AND A CLEAR RECOGNITION OF SELF INTEREST. LEFT TO ITS OWN DEVICES, GOE WOULD PROBABLY NOT ENFORCE ANYTHING OTHER THAN PRIMARY ASPECTS OF BOYCOTT EXCEPT IN PERHAPS MOST HIGHLY SENSITIVE AND VISIBLE CASES. FACT THAT MANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES EVIDENTLY FEEL SAME WAY, AS REPORTS FROM OUR EMBASSIES REVEAL, HAS NOT AS YET CAUSED ANY APPARENT INCREASE IN WILLINGNESS OF INDIVIDUAL NATIONS TO PUBLICLY ABANDON SUPPORT FOR BOYCOTT, BUT EGYPTIANS ARE WILLING TO QUIETLY IGNORE AS MUCH OF IT AS THEY CAN WITHOUT CAUSING THEMSELVES TROUBLE.

2. NEGATIVE CERTIFICATION, PARA 4A REFTTEL, IS A CASE IN POINT. ON BASIS OUR INFORMATION, VIRTUALLY ALL DOCUMENTS
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CONCERNING EGYPIAN BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS CONTAINED

STRONG AND DETAILED LANGUAGE ON THIS SUBJECT PRIOR TO REESTABLISHMENT OF STRONG ECONOMIC TIES WITH US IN 1974. PROCEDURE HAD BECOME A BUREAUCRATIC ROUTINE, AND CARRIED OVER INTO SOME ASPECTS OF AID-FINANCED TRADE FOR THIS REASON. WHEN ATTENTION WAS CALLED TO PROBLEM THIS POSED, USG UNDERTOOK SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO REMOVE NEGATIVE PORTIONS OF CERTIFICATION, WHICH HAVE REPORTEDLY CARRIED OVER INTO NON-USG-FUNDED TRANSACTIONS AS WELL. (EXCEPTION IS CLAUSE ON ISRAELI VESSELS AND PORTS, WHICH IS STILL FRAMED IN NEGATIVE TERMS). EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT "POSITIVE CERTIFICATION" APPROACH TO DEALING WITH PRIMARY BOYCOTT IS ENTIRELY FEASIBLE IN EGYPT, ALTHOUGH ADDITIONAL EFFORT AND TIME WILL BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE PROGRAM.

3. INsofar AS SECONDARY/TERTIARY BOYCOTT IS CONCERNED, PARA 4B, OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THIS IS NOT A SERIOUS CONCERN OF GOE AND SHOULD NOT THEREFORE BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR US. LANGUAGE ON THIS SUBJECT SOMETIMES APPEARS IN DOCUMENTS ON LARGE DEALINGS, BUT IS GENERALLY NOT INCLUDED. LOW-KEY DISCUSSION SHOULD BE ABLE TO PRODUCE DISCREET MOVES TO ELIMINATE OBJECTIONABLE LANGUAGE -- OVER TIME.

4. PROBLEM WITH ALL THE FOREGOING IS THAT IT DOES NOT REFLECT POSSIBLE IMPACT OF RIBICOFF AMENDMENT AND ANY FUTURE US MOVES WHICH MIGHT BE VIEWED AS ANTI-ARAB AND MAY FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF BOYCOTT ADVOCATES, WHO CAN ALSO POINT TO "EFFECTIVENESS" OF PROGRAM AS RESULT OF AMERICAN CONCERNS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT EGYPT WILL BE AMONG MORE PRAGMATIC OF COUNTRIES ADHERING TO BOYCOTT, BUT, LIKE ANY NATION, MAY REACT IRRATIONALLY TO CONFRONTATION.
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